

Organic Advisory Board  
of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM)  
Division of Agriculture and Resource Marketing

DRAFT  
Minutes of Public Meeting of March 2, 2016

Meeting Location: RI DEM Division of Agriculture  
Conference Room 370C  
235 Promenade Street  
Providence, RI 02908

Members Present: Jan Martin-Trounson, Ben Coerper, Dan Lawton, Peter Susi

Members Absent: Skip Paul

Staff Present: Ken Ayars, Scott Marshall, Matt Green (RIDEM/Agriculture)

Others Present: None

The meeting began at 10:15 a.m. at DEM Division of Agriculture, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI. A quorum of board members was present.

Ben Coerper made a motion, seconded by Peter Susi, to appoint Dan Lawton as Chairperson of the Organic Advisory Board (OAB). The motion was approved unanimously.

A correction was made to the draft minutes from the OAB meeting of September 26, 2013, as follows. On page 1, paragraph 2, of the draft minutes, the date of the previous meeting which had been incorrectly written as December 3, 2013, was corrected to December 3, 2012.

Dan Lawton made a motion, seconded by Peter Susi, to approve the minutes from the OAB meeting of September 26, 2013, as corrected. The motion was approved unanimously.

Matt Green summarized the history of the RI Organic Certification Program from 1989-present, and discussed the current certification activities of RIDEM. The numbers of organic operations in the state certified by RIDEM from 1990-present, and those certified by RIDEM and all other certifiers under the National Organic Program (NOP) from 2002-present, were discussed.

The National Organic Program accreditation 2015 mid-term audit summary was discussed. The noncompliance was discussed which, although not identified as a noncompliance during the audit, was identified by NOP after the audit and would require additional staff to be involved in the RIDEM Organic Certification Program certification activities. Also according to issued NOP instructions, additional staff would be needed to complete the annual internal program review.

The Division of Agriculture requested input from the organic industry, and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Rhode Island (NOFA/RI), regarding whether RIDEM should

continue accreditation. The Division of Agriculture will research possible solutions to required changes in the program regarding additional staffing for organic farm inspection, certification and internal review activities.

Proposed amended procedures for resolution of noncompliances following issuance of notices of adverse action to applicants for certification were discussed. NOP Standards 205.662 and 205.663, and NOP 4002 Enforcement of the USDA Organic Regulations: Penalty Matrix, were discussed.

USDA Organic Certification Cost Share Programs funding and usage in 2014-2015, and anticipated programs availability and funding for 2015-2016, were discussed.

The next OAB meeting was not scheduled.

The meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Green  
Environmental Scientist  
RIDEM Division of Agriculture